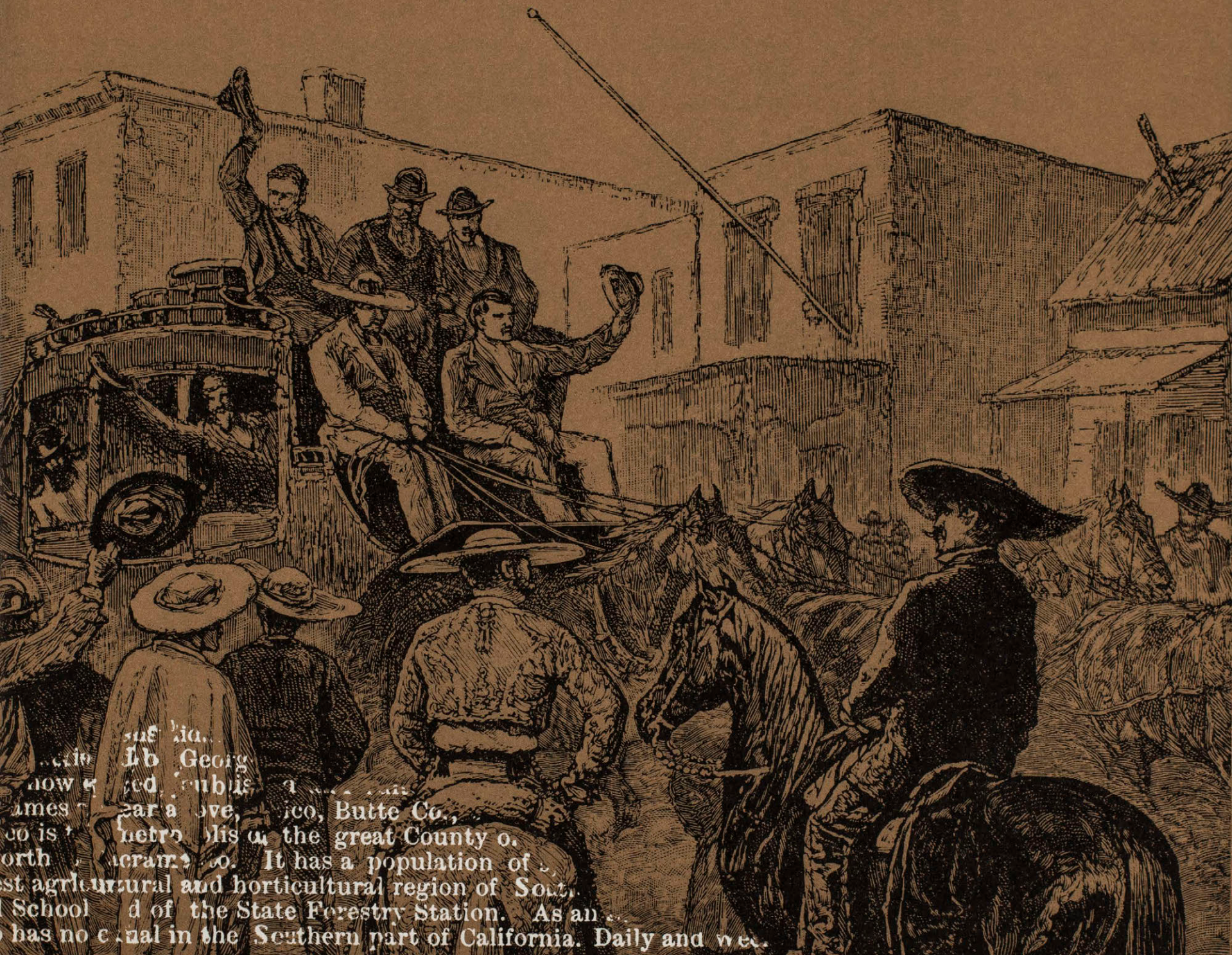




Museum Association

QUARTERLY

Los Angeles County Museum / volume 14, number 4, Autumn 1958



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THE QUARTERLY is published by the Museum Association. Volunteer editors: Elinor Scott Oswald, Alice Henry von Briesen, Virginia S. Weaver, Eleanor Lehner, Marilyn G. Crandall, Susan Edwards Barrett, and Kendall Ellingwood.

Photographers: George Brauer, Dick Denuet of Globe Photos. Designed and printed by Grant Dahlstrom: The Castle Press.

Cover by Jerome Gould.

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The QUARTERLY of the Los Angeles County Museum, Volume 14, No. 4



A Message from Glenn S. Dumke

*President of San Francisco State College and
Author of Boom of the Eighties in Southern
California (published in 1944 by the
Huntington Library)*

ACROSS the façade of the Museum appears the inscription, "The Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science, and Art." People enjoy art; they can see clearly the need for scientific knowledge. But the value of history is harder to sell. It is difficult to convince the average man that only through the careful and painstaking study of the past can we hope to preserve our worthwhile institutions, avoid costly errors, and establish a situation in

which our civilization can be preserved. This is a long, arduous, and difficult task, and it lacks some of the beauty of art and some of the spectacular qualities of science. However, the responsibility of the Museum in this third area is equally great, equally important.

The history program of the Museum has tremendous potential, using for its fodder one of the most picturesque and colorful regions in this country. From the romantic and over-emphasized days of the *dons*, mission bells, and mantillaed *señoritas*, southern California has developed a Yankee urban culture with such speed and dispatch that its history is one of high excitement—featuring land booms, oil booms, and a population migration that is hard to equal anywhere, any time, in the world. Moreover, the Museum collections are rich and varied in their depiction of this progress. The scholar can study the same tract maps that inflamed the booster spirit of the promoters of the 1880's; he can examine the vehicles, weapons, and clothing of the period of the Mexican War; and artifacts of mission and Indian life help to bring a romanticized age down to practical reality.

By dramatizing history and making it live through preservation of its physical accouterments, the Museum is making a tremendous contribution to mankind and particularly to the millions of men and women who live in Southern California. It is an important duty, and it deserves to be carried on with all of the vigor and interest that friends of the Museum have devoted to its other areas of emphasis.

The Coronel Collection

by Ruth Mahood

Curator of History

SEVENTY-FIVE years ago, on the corner of what is now Seventh and Alameda, stood *El Recreo* (Recreation), the home of Don Antonio and Dona Mariana Coronel. It was a low, adobe house, built on three sides of a square, whose windows looked out on an old fashioned garden filled with a great variety of flowers and on to the orchards, vineyards, and orange groves beyond.

The prominent, civic-minded couple who built and occupied this house assembled there a rare collection of early Spanish, Mexican, and Indian costumes, documents, and artifacts which is now known as the Coronel Collection. Exhibited here on loan for many years, the Collection has recently been given to the Los Angeles County Museum.

The Coronels understood very well the value that their collection would have in bringing about an understanding of life in early California. They loved their California heritage and they were willing to do the most painstaking research and careful documentation in order that this heritage might be passed on to future generations. It is because of this that the Coronels were able to acquire and pass on to us a valuable collection that sheds a vast amount of light on the dress, diversions, sports, dances, customs, and manners of early California. Don Antonio Coronel, one of the most civic-minded men the City of Angels has known, was born in Mexico City on October 21, 1817. He was graduated as a physician, but before practicing his profession, he came to California in 1834 with his parents who were members of the Hajar-Padres colony. A few years after his arrival he assisted his father, Ygnacio Coronel, in establishing the first



public school in Los Angeles. As text books were unknown, Don Ygnacio used his own school copybooks and copied lessons from them on the blackboard.

Through the years Don Antonio held many public offices. In 1838 he was appointed Assistant Secretary of Tribunals; in 1843 he was chosen Judge of the First Instance (Justice of the Peace); from 1850 to 1852 he served as Los Angeles County Assessor; in 1853 he was elected Mayor of Los Angeles; in 1867 he was elected State Treasurer and served four years. He was also a member of the State Horticultural Society, and in 1883, when the Historical Society of Southern California was founded, he acted as one of its Vice-Presidents.

In 1873, at the age of fifty-six he married Mariana Williamson, a descendant of Admiral Nelson. She remained his faithful helpmate, counselor, and devoted companion until his death in 1894, and she assisted him in assembling what is now known as the Coronel Collection. For years the Collection was kept in the Coronel house, but after the death of Don Antonio, Dona Mariana gave it to the Chamber of Commerce in order that the people of Los Angeles could see and study it at their pleasure. A room was prepared and the Collection was exhibited there in its entirety for a number of years. In 1915 the Chamber decided to loan the Collection to the Los Angeles County Museum where there were facili-

ties to preserve, exhibit, and store the items in a fireproof building.

Probably the outstanding items in the Collection are the documents and costumes. Documents, important to any way of living, tell a story or substantiate a fact in a way that no other printed item can. The documents preserved by the Coronels take the reader back to a hundred years ago in Los Angeles and Southern California. The many wedding and funeral invitations and the birth announcements make it possible to trace the events in the lives of numerous Southern California families in the 1800's. And we know, too, the exact dates when Don Antonio held certain offices through the certificates of appointment which have been preserved.

Today when we are aware of the increasing need for water for our fast-growing area, we perhaps little realize that in 1867, when Los Angeles was just beginning to expand, the water supply, particularly for irrigation, was a problem. A report from the Water Committee to the Gentlemen of the Common Council, dated November 7, 1867, states:

"Your committee has constantly kept in view the fact that cultivation is the great source of wealth to this city, and would much desire that every inch of land should be under cultivation, but the amount of water prevents this desirable object, and we must be governed by circumstances."

The document bears the signature of A. F. Coronel.

Three items of inestimable importance and

Coronels Springs
Aug. 9
1873

My dear friends, Your letter of the 13th tells me with surprise, I also had been wondering why I did not hear from you, as if the Indian woman ever had finished the case. — I think I was very much mistaken in writing after I mailed mine, that I sent you a line, to let you know I was safe in my own house, and was glad to be there. — I have had several letters go astray in that way. Within the last few months, I do not know when the trouble is. — I have not been quite well, since returning.

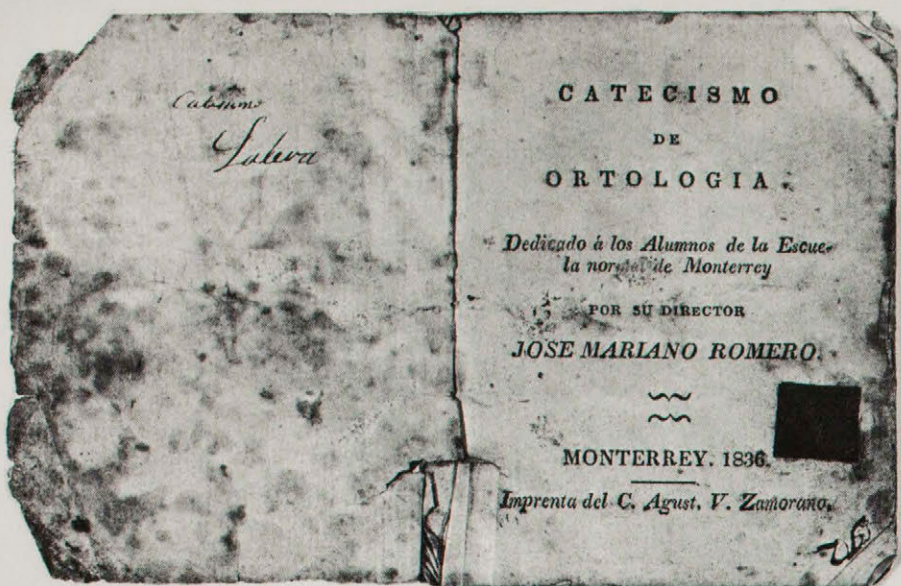
This high altitude — 6000 feet — gives me trouble, never as much as when I return to it. I envy you who live at sea level. — I suppose you have seen that the Indian Agent Lawson has resigned. Some very amusing paragraphs in the California paper in regard to it have been sent to me. — I think it will be a gain to the Indians to have him removed. They of course, there is always a danger of having a wolf in the fold. I do not know who is appointed in his place. My Report to the Interior Dept. went in, a month ago; but I have not yet heard anything from it. The movements at Washington are very slow. — I shall

See Secretary Teller here before long, and shall then learn what his plans are. I trust something will be done by Congress next winter, for the Indian Indians. — Mr. Jackson has been suddenly called to the East — and will be away two or three weeks. This is almost intolerable to me. I do not like being alone in my house — and when he is away, there seems to be no reason why I should remain at this altitude which does me so much harm. — Mr. Kiny is having a good time, at the different watering places at the East. We hear from him occasionally, each time at a new place.

He staid three days with us, on his way through Colorado. I have been looking at the early photographs of myself — and really they are so bad, I cannot make up my mind to send you one. — I do not think you would want it. — If I ever get a good one, I will send you one. — With warm regards to you both — and my remembrance to Miss Mercad. I am always truly yours, Helen Jackson

P.S. — Father wrote back the things, chiefly here, my mistake. — So if you do not find those you have, in the way I will send them, as yet — till I can again — or you get some my bowls from me. This is added to the list.

A letter from Helen Hunt Jackson, who visited the Coronels often while gathering material for RAMONA



Fly leaf from a book printed by Zamorano in California in 1836



Don Antonio Coronel wearing a cape now exhibited as part of the Coronel Collection. Painted by Alexander F. Harmer.

value are the Zamorano books. Augustin V. Zamorano was the first printer in California, and these books, the first printed here, were the beginning of a vast industry which has grown and flourished. *Reglamento Provicional*, the first book printed in California, was printed in 1834 and contained the rules and regulations adopted by the territorial legislature for the government of its organization and sessions. It was loaned to George L. Harding in 1954 in order that the San Francisco Book Club could reproduce a facsimile copy.

Manifiesto a la Republica Mejica, printed in 1835, was Governor Figueroa's vindication of his policies in regard to the activities of Hjar and Padres. *Catecismo de Ortologia*, 1836, was a catechism of spelling by Jose Mariano Romero, director of the normal school in Monterey.

Just recently the manuscript of *Pastorela*, in Don Antonio's handwriting, was sent to the Bancroft Library in Berkeley for translation to be used in a forthcoming publication by the California Historical Society. Many times Don Antonio acted the part of chief shepherd in the *Pastorela*, a Christmas pageant performed in early Los Angeles.

Correspondence of General Jose Flores, interim Governor of California, to his friend General Andres Pico, "brings to life the triumph, confusion, and despair of an historic week." These letters were written at a time when Californians were fighting the invasion of American troops during the Mexican War. The faded and yellowed letters were partially translated by a member of the Museum staff, Mr. James A. Honey, and were used by Remi Nadeau for his article "Ordeal of a General" which appeared in the May 1958 *Westways*.

Now, as we reach the centennial of the overland mail (the first overland mail reached Los Angeles on October 7, 1858), we are reminded of the value of early Pony Express letters. In the Coronel collection we find two such letters from Isaac Stevens, Chairman of the National Executive Committee, to Don Antonio in which reference is made to the 1860 campaign of Lincoln and Douglas.

These are only a few of the items of source material, but these and others are consulted constantly by research workers and writers. Also important to research workers are the many copies of early Los Angeles newspapers in the Collection, such as the *Star*, Los Angeles' first newspaper, *La Cronica*, the *Times*, and the *Herald*.

During her sojourn in Southern California, while she was collecting material for *Ramona*, Helen Hunt Jackson spent many hours as a guest of the Coronels. Her correspondence with them and her own copy of the book,

which she presented to Dona Mariana, are on exhibit in the California History gallery.

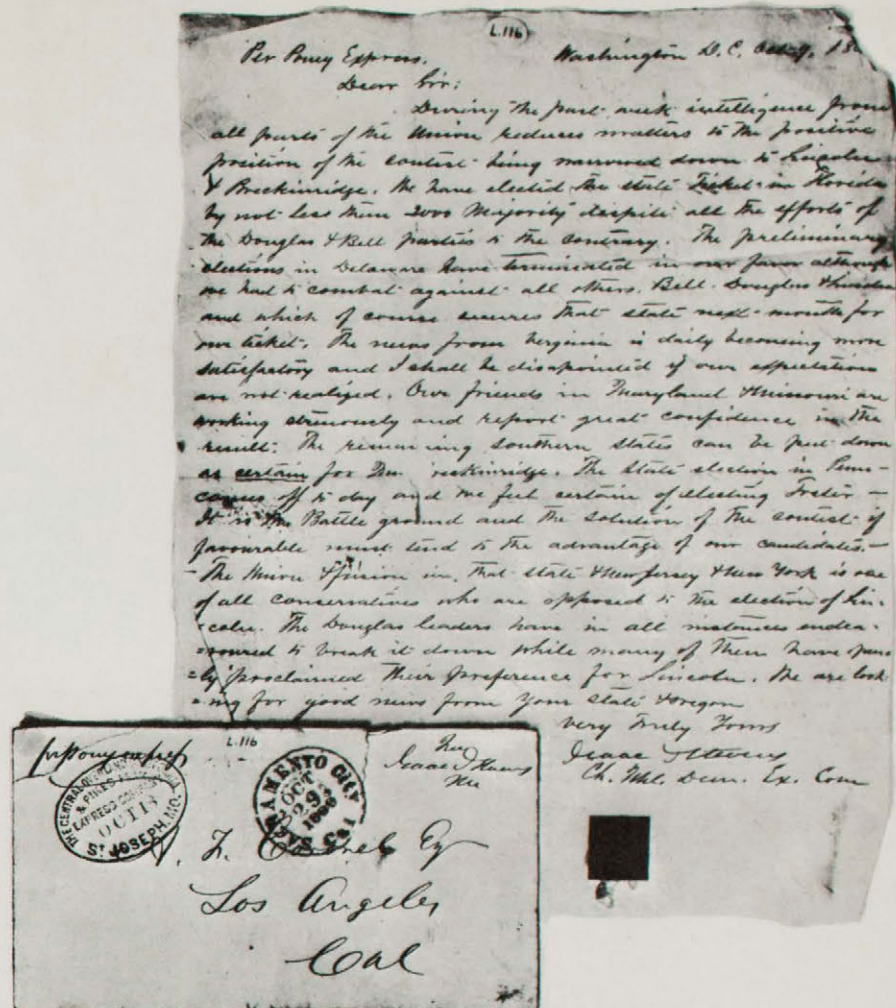
The costumes in the Coronel Collection probably provide more information about the daily life, tastes, occupations, and activities of early Californians than any other one collection. The Collection is especially noteworthy because it includes all of the items of clothing worn by a single family of early California men, women, and children.

It is interesting to study Don Antonio's cape, the cape of a *gente de razon*—so characteristic of the period, so Mexican, yet of such magnificent richness—and to consider it as the translation of the simple Mexican poncho in the adjoining display case in the California gallery.

In the Collection are several pairs of white linen drawers worn by the Spanish California gentleman, possibly as a badge of prosperity. Before 1834 gentlemen wore short trousers with these linen drawers showing between the bottom of the trouser leg and the top of the *bota*. Imagine the consternation of these fastidious Californians when they discovered that their clothes were out of style! For several years the Mexicans, who were first to receive news of the latest styles in Spain, had been wearing long *calzoneras* (trousers). How could the Californians change to the long trousers without sacrificing their cherished linen drawers? They reached a happy compromise by buttoning the *calzoneras* up the outside of the leg, but only part way! Today the gaily-colored inserts on the outside of the legs of fiesta trousers are a vestige of these half-buttoned *calzoneras*.

In addition to the clothing items, there are in the Collection samples of textiles used in the house. Window and wall hangings show the styles of the late 1800's. There are many pieces of church embroidery. Many pieces of drawn-work, and other types of needlework, both finished and unfinished, make it possible to piece together the story of women's activities around the house.

One could go on indefinitely listing items of significance and importance in the Collection. There are items from missions, from Mexico,



Pony Express letter and cover

from the Indians. There are photographs of costumes, buildings, missions, landscapes, and early Los Angeles residents. There are saddles, utensils, weapons, dishes, and brands and branding irons. The Collection also contains several paintings of pastoral California by Alexander F. Harmer. An article about one of them appears in the Summer 1958 *Quarterly*.

When one understands the importance which the Museum attaches to the Coronel Collection, it is reasonable to ask why the Collection is not exhibited in its entirety. Besides the limitations of space and duplications in the Collection, there is another very good reason: the Collection is unquestionably exhibited to its greatest advantage when its items are used to complete other exhibitions. For instance, a costume from the Collection may evoke a definite nostalgia for a bygone day as an independent item. When it is seen in relation to other objects in a planned setting of the period, however, a whole period of California history may come to life for a viewer. When you visit the Museum, we hope that you will see how the Coronel Collection helps you relive the fascinating story of early California.



Pre-Spanish culture pottery recovered from the lake bottom along with the fossils but of more recent age. Included are: tripod polychrome bowl (left), "miniature offertory vessel" (center), and round vessel or OLLA.

From the Bottom of the Lake

by Theodore Downs

Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology

AMONG the thousands of tourists who have visited Lago de Chapala, the most extensive lake in Mexico, seventeen miles south of Guadalajara, few have ever suspected the presence of strange "black bones" and Indian pottery at the bottom of its shallow waters.

In 1952 a member of the Museum Association who visited this interesting part of old Mexico became more than the casual tourist. Mr. Robert B. Peters of Laguna Beach, a retired analytical chemist, realized there were indeed peculiar circumstances relative to the origin of these "black bones" and pottery from the lake bottom. Fortunately he was curious enough to return to Los Angeles with some of the first fossil specimens from this graveyard of the past, which he donated to the Museum.

On the basis of Mr. Peters' report, members of the Museum staff also became curious. We were eager to investigate further because these fossils appeared to be very much like our famed Rancho La Brea animals. We wanted many questions answered. How did the fauna compare with the tar pit beasts? Were there new unknown animals that might be discovered in this critical area situated at the midpoint between the North and South American continents? Why were the fossils in the bottom of the lake? Did ancient Indians



A fisherman and his family who lived on the island. Fossils are shown on the right and were collected by the members of the family within 50 feet of their home.

throw them there along with the pottery as some people supposed? And why were all the fossils so strikingly black in color?

In 1955 and 1956 members of the Vertebrate Paleontology and Mineralogy Departments of the Museum made expeditions to Lago de Chapala and its surrounding areas. The Museum is indebted to the Institute of Geology in Mexico City for granting us permission to make these studies. Mr. Peters, whose curiosity had led us to the spot, accompanied us. His seventy-nine years do not deter him from participating in field work along with younger Museum people. In 1955 and 1956 he accompanied Dr. Thomas Clements of the Department of Mineralogy and me on Museum trips to Mexico. In addition, since that time, he has carried on many private in-

vestigations at his own expense and personal sacrifice. With funds from the Museum Association, allocated to the Science Division, he purchased specimens on two trips to the lake in 1957 and 1958.

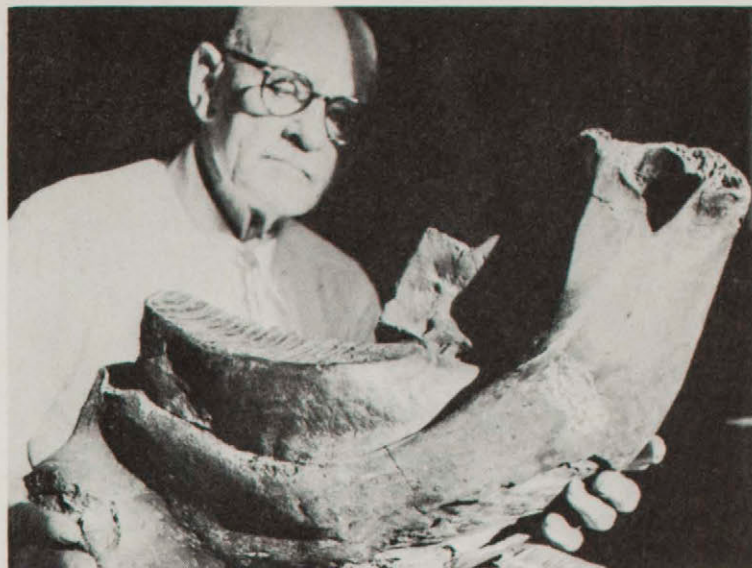
Lago de Chapala is situated about 5,000 feet above sea level, and normally, during wet years, is at least fifty miles long and eight to ten miles wide. But several seasons of drought, notably during the years of 1953 and 1954, and excessive pumping of lake water for use in the city of Guadalajara had changed the lake level and, luckily for us, resulted in the exposure of some unusual records of the past.

Many local residents of the area uncovered some of the relics by literally stubbing their toes and snagging their fishing nets on fossil bones and Indian pottery scattered along the shores of the receding lake. Fossil bones were plowed up in fields being cultivated along the former shore line. All in all we managed to gather quite a marvelous collection which at least partially answered our questions concerning the ancient history of Lago de Chapala.

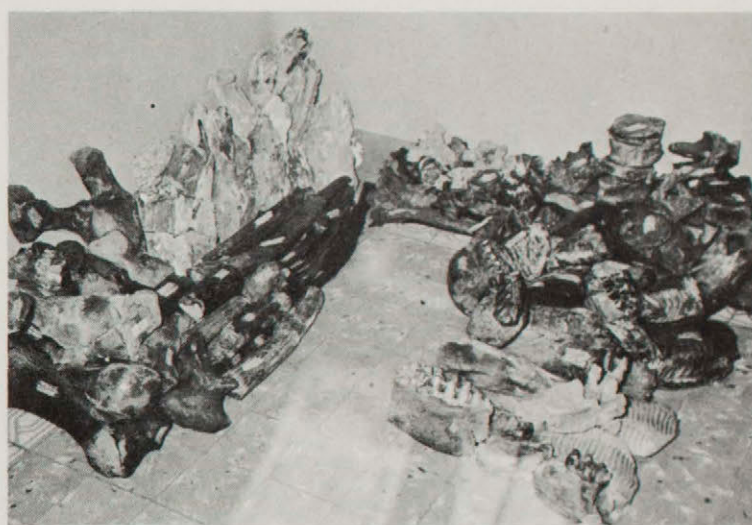
Hundreds of the fossils, taken from the western end of the lake bottom, lived during the late Pleistocene period, not over 30,000 years ago. They were probably buried in prehistoric lake sediments which were exposed and eroded away, perhaps during a dry period, and the sediments were removed at least in part by active circulation of the recent lake waters. The bones were left as residue.

The color mystery of the bones was also solved. Colloidal manganese has been precipitated in the past and present to give the glossy black coloring which permeates the bone. In some instances the manganese is even deposited in layers on the bone surface.

According to Dr. Robert M. Ariss, Curator of Anthropology, the character of the pottery from the lake bottom indicates a probable pre-Spanish culture. Possibly the items were placed in the lake as offerings to deity, but we don't believe the fossil specimens were offertory items or "thrown" into the lake by ancient man. Actually the fossils represent many



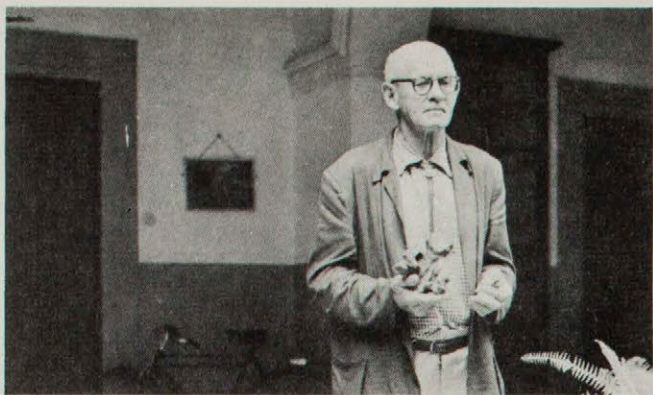
Mr. Peters examines a fossil mammoth jaw, one of the abundant animals from the lake bottom



Fossils from the lake bottom and now a part of the private collection of Sr. Federico A. Solorzano of Guadalajara, Mexico. Included are numerous mastodon and mammoth teeth and tusks.



View of the "Old Island" along the south shore of Lago de Chapala, the original site where the first fossils were found in 1952. The water at this time was only a few inches deep and fossils were easily collected on the bottom as well as on the shore of the island.



Mr. Peters holding some fossil specimens taken from the lake bottom.



View of the original fossil locality, including the "Old Island," when the lake water was at normal level in the fall of 1957.



An extinct four-pronged antelope from the Lake bottom, showing the four horns and the base of the cranium. Collected by R. B. Peters.

extinct animals which lived prior to the time of the Indians who made the pottery.

Specimens include small and large ground sloths, giant capybara that must have weighed at least four hundred pounds, jaguar, saber-tooth cat, spiral tusk mastodon, mammoth, large and small Mexican horses, peccary, ta-

pir, camel, four-pronged antelope, elk, deer, bison, and a large catfish! All are from the lake bottom sites and their remains are now safely stored in the Museum's collections. Except for the jaguar, elk, deer, and catfish, all of these creatures represent extinct animals.

The records of the sloths and capybara indicate the Chapala area was situated along the route taken by these ice age creatures as they migrated from their original home in South America, north to western United States. Conversely, the records of the jaguar, saber-tooth, mastodon, mammoth, horses, peccary, tapir, camel, antelope, elk, deer, and bison indicate that these forms migrated from origins in northern North America to Mexico, and in some instances to South America. An elaboration on this interesting story of faunal interchange can be seen in the Museum display on geographic distribution in the Hall of Evolving Life.

After the original lake bottom discoveries, Mr. Peters made further discoveries of fossils more than a million years older than the first. These were in ancient dipping lake sediments exposed immediately north of the town of Chapala on the north side of Lago de Chapala. The fossils recovered from these strata include fewer numbers of specimens but important records of fish, crocodile, turtle, cormorant, flamingo, spiral tusk mastodon, a large one-toed horse, a grazing (yet small) three-toed horse called *Nannippus*, and a peccary.

There are hundreds of fossil specimens from the bottom of Lago de Chapala that are now "hidden" in private collections in North America and as yet unstudied. Some collections, however, such as that of the friend of Mr. Peters, Sr. Federico A. Solorzano of Guadalajara, have helped tremendously in our research. Because of information supplied by private collectors, and Mr. Peters' continued search for new areas, we do know of other localities near Chapala and southward toward Colima. Until funds are available, Museum expedition parties are waiting to investigate the still unexplored regions to complete our story.

A Preview of Coming Art Exhibitions

A PREVIEW of coming attractions to be provided by the Art Division of the Los Angeles County Museum reveals a veritable treasure for the coming year. Our previewer is James Elliott, Assistant Chief Curator of Art, who has the staggering responsibility of coordinating the innumerable arrangements required to plan, present, and close every exhibition. A brief outline of procedure fills more than five pages and includes such headings as size and scope, clearance, research, correspondence, receipt of exhibition, gallery preparation, installation, publicity, printing, opening, and return of exhibition. Sub-headings include details such as insurance, labeling, security, catalogue, and a myriad of others. It ends with the follow-up and written assurance that the items have been returned to the participating museums and collectors in perfect condition. By that time the next exhibition is on view in the galleries.

In addition to this mountain of work undertaken at the Museum itself, our curators must be Johnny-on-the-spot throughout the art world to speak for Los Angeles when exhibitions are in the planning stage. In the past four years Los Angeles has gained in prestige to the point where many more important exhibitions are being made available to us. It is a kind of coming of age that doesn't just happen. It has to be made to happen.

Slated for viewing, beginning in November, is the Exhibition of Prints, Drawings, and sculpture by Honoré Daumier. This marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of Daumier. Ebria Feinblatt, Curator of Prints and Drawings, journeyed east during the summer to locate works and gather information for the catalogue which she is writing. At about the time this article appears, jurying for the 1958 Annual Exhibition of the California Water-

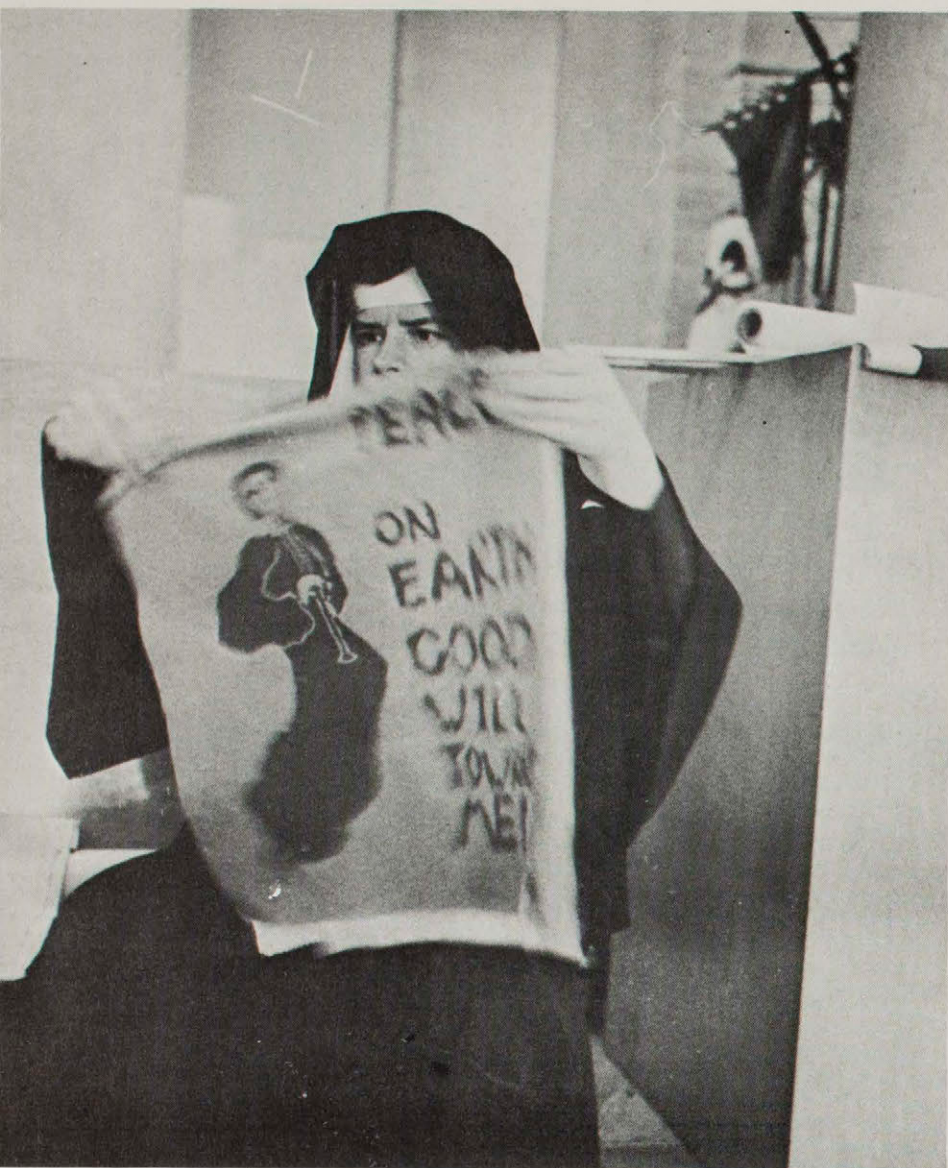
color Society will be in progress and the results will be exhibited concurrently with the Daumier Exhibition. An exhibition of National Costumes from the Museum's Collection also is planned for November.

The Van Gogh Show, an admission-free show which will be open in early December, is being arranged in cooperation with the Van Gogh family and Dutch Museums by the De Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco and the Los Angeles County Museum. It will include paintings and drawings from European collections and also from some collections in America. This exhibition will be shown in Portland and Seattle also. It is comparable to the exhibition on view a few years ago at the Metropolitan Museum in New York and elsewhere. The Museum Bookshop has ordered thousands of prints and postcards showing reproductions of these works. They will be available along with books and a catalogue.

In late January the Korean National Treasures will be exhibited under the auspices of the Government of the Republic of Korea. They are being shown in a cooperative program by a number of major museums in this country. The admission fee will help to offset the high cost of bringing these costly treasures from Korea and insuring them. Special curators travel with the exhibition to supervise its transportation and installation. The Treasures were first presented in the National Gallery in Washington, and subsequently at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and other museums. Following the showing here, the exhibition will go to Honolulu and then back to Korea.

The Indian Paintings from Rajasthan, circulated by the Smithsonian Institution, include 73 miniatures. Some date from the beginning of the 16th century. They were first exhibited in Britain by the Arts Council of Great Britain and are now being shown in the United States. None of the paintings had been on view outside of India before. Together they form the most comprehensive survey of early Rajput painting ever shown. This exhibition opens April 1st.

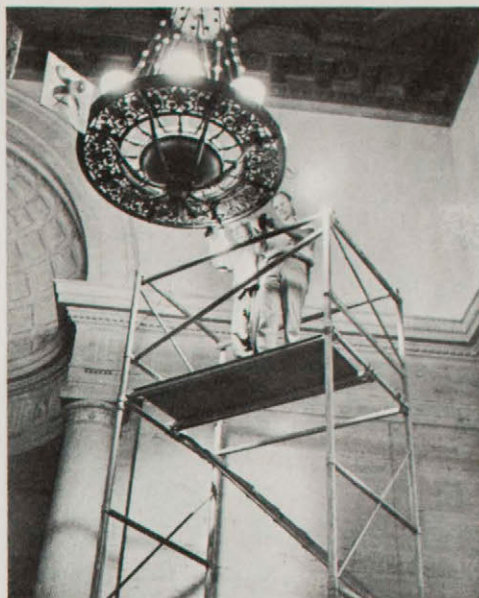
At this same time an exceptional exhibition



Sister Mary Corita's Flying Carpet

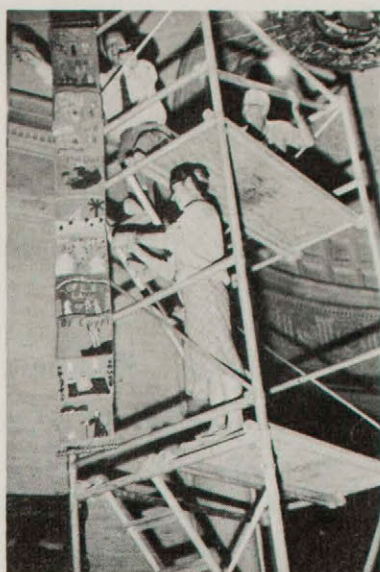
The traveling exhibition of photographs which was assembled by the American Institute of Architects in celebration of its centennial told the exciting story of the development of American architecture during the last hundred years. To complement this exhibition, the AIA commissioned Sister Mary Corita of Immaculate Heart College, Los Angeles, to prepare an exhibition of banners, which, like the photographs, had something important to say about the dwelling places of man. Hovering momentarily in flight across the ceiling of the foyer, the colorful flying carpet of Sister Mary Corita's banners concealed a heart-warming story of the triumph of ingenuity and courage over a difficult installation problem.





AFTER PLANNING and working together for a week, with the limitations of a single scaffold and the four massive chandeliers, Sister Mary Corita and those who had helped her viewed with dismay the results of their labor of love. The banners, hanging vertically from wires stretched between the chandeliers, were too high up to be seen from below. (Please turn the page.)





AN INGENUOUS new plan, devised by Mr. Elliott, made the best possible use of the limiting scaffold and chandeliers.

The result was a uniquely suitable and effective display.

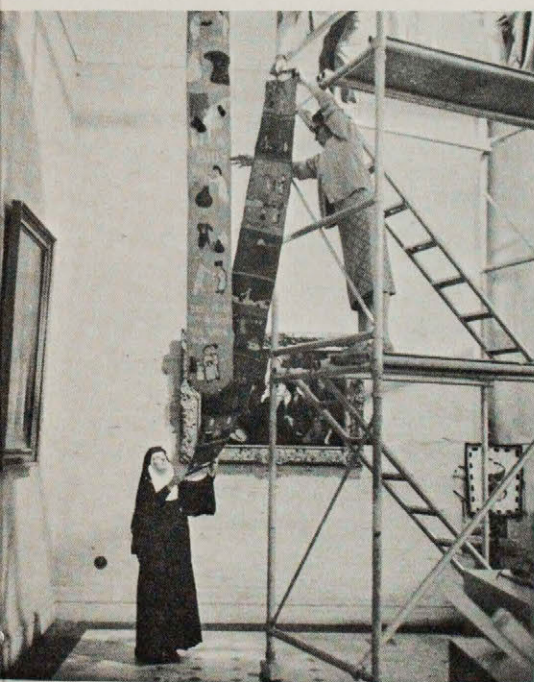
(1) The banners, rectangles of varying size, were laid out on the floor of the foyer to form an intricately patterned "carpet."

(2) At each corner of the carpet a long two-by-four was placed on end.

(3) To each corner of each banner was attached a wire which lead to a post—for wires, one for each post—thus fixing exactly the position of each banner in relation to the others.

(4) When all the wires had been secured, the posts were elevated, one at a time, on the scaffolding and lashed vertically to the chandeliers.

Photographs by Dick Miller of Globe and by Sister Mary Corita.



of Persian Textiles will be presented. Mrs. Stephania Holt, Curator of Costumes and Textiles, has been combing famous textile collections as well as some known only to specialists to find 150 choice pieces dating from the Sassanian Period through the 18th century. Loans will come from the Yale Gallery; museums in Detroit, Cleveland, and New York as well as from the Textile Museums in Lyon and Paris, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and from collections in Iran and Poland. Concurrently there will be an Exhibition of Prints and Drawings by June Wayne showing her most recent work in Paris, some of which has not been shown before. She is a nationally known printmaker who makes her home in Los Angeles. This will be the first one-man exhibition of Mrs. Wayne's work here and inaugurates a new policy of holding one-man shows of local graphic artists from time to time.

A retrospective exhibition of the work of Joan Miro, pioneer of expressive abstraction, is being co-sponsored with the Museum of Modern Art in New York and is scheduled for showing here in May. Los Angeles is the only city other than New York where it will be seen. This is an admission-fee show and promises to be typical of the Modern Museum of Art's great shows on twentieth century artists. A new monograph on Miro's work has just been written by James Johnson Sweeney to accompany the show and serve as a catalogue.

August and September are the months set for the 1959 Annual Exhibition of Artists of Los Angeles and Vicinity. It will open the fall season rather than closing the spring season as it has in the past. The Multiple Print Exhibition organized in cooperation with the Print Council of America will be on view in September. It is a large show of contemporary prints which will open simultaneously in several museums in the United States.

The Maillol Show planned for November will include forty original casts which have been obtained from the heirs of Maillol for showing at several museums in America.

Sculpture shows haven't been too frequent here, largely because of high shipping costs from the east. Our curators, in the belief that we should see the same range of sculpture exhibitions as those in lighter media, and that Southern California's light and weather are ideal for viewing sculpture, have been working with mid-western and other western museums to share the expense of such exhibitions. The Maillol show will be installed in the outdoor sculpture court and will be followed in 1960 by "Recent Sculpture U.S.A." from the Museum of Modern Art, and, later a large selection from a private collection of modern sculpture.

Just as exciting as these definite plans are those that still must be marked "tentative." It will probably be possible to present an exhibition of the art of animation showing Walt Disney's contribution to animated film. Plans are underway for a Mayan exhibition arranged with the Detroit Museum and the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. It will include loans from the National Museum of Guatemala as well as from European and American collectors. Planned for the same time as the Mayan show is an exhibition of abstract classicism by California artists. It will be organized at the Los Angeles County Museum and Jules Langsner will write the catalogue. The exhibition will present the work of Southern California artists associated by an abstract style in which one finds geometric, intellectual, and constructivist qualities which have traditionally characterized the classical strain in the history of art. The show of abstract classicism and the June Wayne show are initial steps in plans to extend exhibitions of contemporary art and especially that of resident artists.

With these plans there are others too indefinite to mention at present. However, the Art Division is working with dedication and inspiration to improve the exhibition program, hopefully looking forward to the day when with better facilities and larger quarters and larger space a more fully developed program can be realized.

The Museum Staff Selects

*Dr. Richard F. Brown,
Chief Curator of Art, reviews*

THREE HUNDRED YEARS OF AMERICAN PAINTING, by Alexander Eliot; with an introduction by John Walker; published by Time, Incorporated, New York, 1957; 318 pages; 250 illustrations in color. \$13.50.

The ingrained idea that American civilization and culture is new and young often blinds us to interesting observations. Three hundred years is as long as it took ancient Greek civilization to bring art from almost pre-historic archaism, over one of the highest peaks of perfection known to man, and on to the full-blown, fading flower of the Hellenistic age. The same length of time is the outside temporal dimension that most historians would allot to art that could be considered as belonging to the Italian Renaissance. A comparable period has elapsed since the first anonymous portraits were made of settlers on the eastern coast of America and the latest abstraction by the west coast's Mark Tobey. In this new book the Art Editor of Time Magazine, Alexander Eliot, has surveyed beautifully American painting between these extreme points in time, place and style.

This long retrospective look back over the art historical landscape provides a very charming view, but not a grand or dramatic one. As John Walker, Director of the National Gallery, says in his excellent introduction to the book: "The Italian Renaissance might be likened to a landscape marked by towering peaks and whole mountain ranges of lofty

genius. By comparison, the American artistic scene suggests a gently rolling countryside with meadows and low hills." But the "low hills" offer enough pure aesthetic beauty so that no American need be apologetic about his artistic heritage. In addition, as this book amply proves, the painting of no people has so completely, intimately and succinctly documented their history. As Mr. Eliot rightly concludes in his very last paragraph, "...American art has been a running accompaniment to the nation's history. For change and progress are the stuff of life, especially in America. And life itself, especially in America, is the heart and soul of painting." A slow leafing through this volume, therefore, just to look at the pictures, is a refresher course in American history.

It is also a visual delight. There are not too many books concerned with pictures about which one can say that the best thing is the pictures. Over the years Time Magazine made a great many color plates to illustrate its art page. These were saved, and after taking considerable pains to correct the color balances, the results are admirably close to the originals as printed on the better paper of the book, and produced under less pressing and often "remote control" circumstances unavoidable in the publishing of a weekly news magazine.

Offering prime admiration to the pictures is not to belittle Mr. Eliot's text. This is much more than a "picture book." The author's work is well-founded in good scholarship, is very easy to read, and, upon many occasions when he supplies apt quotations from artists or their contemporaries, highly amusing. The extreme readability of style must, of course, sacrifice the fully informative type of text that can only be incorporated by the usually dry and systematic method of scholarly exposition. You won't find *all* the facts about any artist, group, movement or picture. And, even though Eliot gets most of the important ones in for basic understanding, often they are slipped in so smoothly that an unalert reader might miss their significance. Occasionally, an exaggerated sense of metaphor or pun, in the "Time" tradition, creeps in irksomely. The

author's partiality for "The Realist Tradition" shows somewhat in his "up beat" treatment of this style in the very last section; and this tends to disjoint the logic of chronology.

There is a very usable index, a bibliography, to lead the reader into more restricted studies, and a fascinating chronological chart in color, among other attractive features of a book that can be returned to time and time again to enrich one's knowledge and enjoyment of American art and American history.

There is one point missing. Whereas American artists from Copley and West to

Whistler and Sargent went to Europe to drink at the well-springs of inspiration while the people of foreign lands automatically assumed there *was* no inspiration in America, today American contemporary art is being exhibited, bought, studied and published abroad as it never has before. Perhaps after three hundred years, instead of fading, our art is just blossoming.

(This book may be purchased from the Museum Bookshop at Museum Association membership discount rates.)

Christmas Shopping in the Los Angeles County Museum



CHRISTMAS cards featuring art reproductions from famous collections are priced at 5c to 25c each. And you can find a gift here for each member of the family, from the youngest toddler, through the college student, to the hard-to-please adult. Remember, a 20% discount is available to Museum Association members on nearly all items.

Besides mineral sets, handmade Indian sterling silver jewelry, gold-plated reproductions of ancient jewelry, bronze-finished reproductions of prehistoric animals (\$1.25 to \$2.50), and prints and reproductions of paintings, there are BOOKS.

For the very young you may choose American Indian coloring books—Navaho, Pueblo, Hopi and Zuni, and Apache, at 50c each. Or the *I Can Draw* set at \$1.25. Or a *Flowers and Birds* coloring set at \$1.50. And books about birds, fishes, insects, cats, dogs, reptiles, ships,

rivers, stars—nearly everything a child asks about—are 69c each.

Older children enjoy more amplified versions of these subjects. A few titles are: Familiar American Species of Reptiles and Amphibians; Fishes; Mammals; Insects. Others are: Weather; Rocks and Minerals; Flowers; Stars, and many more.

A boon to the whole family are booklets telling about the flora and fauna, seashells, and minerals to be found in Los Angeles County. Called the Los Angeles County Museum Science Series, these are written by our Museum staff members. No discount on these items, but the prices are extremely low.

Invaluable to college students are "histomaps" of evolution, history, and religion (\$1.50 each). And what young connoisseur wouldn't welcome a selection of his favorite painters from among the *Pocket Books of Art* (75c each)?

Of course you can spend more if you like. Mrs. Neva Nugent, Manager of the Bookshop, has a wealth of handsome volumes to tempt sophisticated tastes. Art and science books for children go up to \$8.95; for adults to \$25.

Speaking of Christmas gifts, a membership in the MUSEUM ASSOCIATION will bring its recipient many kinds of enjoyment throughout the year.

The Restorer's Art

*Frederick B. Anthon
Restorer for the Museum*

CLEANING a painting is far more complex than cleaning a window. A painting is rarely smooth like glass but has a texture to which darkened varnish, repaint, dust, grime, soot, and smog adhere. Viewed under the binocular microscope the average oil painting resembles our weathered planet when seen from the air.

Mountain ranges of heavy impasto sink to plains crisscrossed by valleys and crevasses often filled with varnish and media forming pools and veritable lakes! Erosion—most severe at high points; internal stress resulting in uplift or tilting; expansion and contraction due to temperature changes take their toll.

To counteract these forces the painting has been protected with a coat of varnish. Well and good, were it not that most varnishes used in the past were of the natural resin variety and a hazard in themselves. Many of them darken, fracture, and bloom; grow brittle with age, and pull at the paint causing it to flake.

Where the varnish is causing damage it must be removed. This kind of cleaning should be undertaken only by an expert with years of experience and a thorough knowledge of the ingredients that make up a painting.

On a smooth picture painted on copper, panel, or evenly primed canvas supports, the resin powder is reduced by prolonged rubbing of the finger on the varnish. One finger is used until the varnish begins to crumble, then two, and on a large picture the whole hand.



The friction is kept up with a circular motion until the varnish whitens and turns to powder.

Because uneven-surfaced pictures may become abraded during this process they require special solvents and diluents whose use, however, is fraught with danger.

Especially susceptible are pictures painted in glazes and scumbles, asphaltum, bitumen, and similar fugitive colors for which the English school is so well noted.

The removal of varnish and repaint with solvents is accomplished with the painting preferably laid flat.

On the right is a vessel containing a predetermined mixture of diacetone and turpentine or denatured alcohol. On the left is another containing a mixture of pure turpentine, with pine-oil of balsam copaiba added to reduce evaporation.



With a wad of cotton, a brush, or a soft sponge the solvent mixture is applied lightly to the varnish.

The moment the varnish layer begins to yield, the biting action is checked by passing over it a cotton wad dipped in neutralizing turpentine.

This process is repeated painstakingly, area by area, until all traces of varnish, and in most cases of repaint, have been removed. The cotton is examined frequently to make sure solvent has not attacked the painting.

Resistant areas of depression in the impasto must be treated with a more potent solvent mixture. A stiff bristle brush, a scalpel knife, even a razor blade may be resorted to.

It is best to begin the process on dark draperies or background. Sky, face, and other essential parts are left until the nature of the varnish and its reaction to the solvent has been determined. Spot tests give clues to the state of preservation of the picture beneath the varnish.

It is sometimes possible to remove the varnish partially, leaving a thin skin evenly laid over the whole picture. Sometimes, when air has pene-

trated between the varnish molecules, the disintegrated resins can be fused by exposure to alcohol vapors, restoring the varnish temporarily to its former transparency and lustre.

Losses may be uncovered in the cleaning process. If they are extensive and interfere with the aesthetic enjoyment of the picture or destroy its unity they must be compensated for, preferably with neutral tones. At any rate utmost care must be taken not to alter the character of the picture or to try to improve on the artist.

The kind of cleaning described above is emphatically not recommended for do-it-yourselfers. "More pictures are destroyed by cleaning than by any other means," writes Moreau-Vautier, leading authority in this field.

Fortunately the old-type natural resin varnishes are being supplanted by synthetic types belonging to the family of acrylic resins. These miracles of modern chemistry have none of the disadvantages of natural resin varnishes. They are crystal clear and flexible, with scarcely any tendency to darken, bloom, or blush; they will mix with wax, and can be removed with mild solvents.

Where the varnish is intact and only superficially soiled, accretions may yield to tincture of green soap diluted with proper amounts of distilled water and applied gently with cotton or sponge. A dark corner is treated first and utmost caution used, since a too concentrated solution can mean a ruined picture. Naturally one must first make absolutely certain that the painting is not executed in tempera or watercolor!

Normally this superficial cleaning should be done every five years, followed by an application of *Carnuba* wax-bearing furniture polish, a formula recommended by the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

As has been proven in the past, wax is in many ways superior to resin type varnish as a protection for paintings. It does not cause cracking or flaking and is unaffected by acids in the atmosphere.

Had wax been used on oil paintings instead of the old style varnishes, countless pictures now hopelessly abraded from excessive cleaning might have survived!

In The Museum Spotlight

Memorable Art Meeting Here

As President of the Western Association of Art Museums, Chief Curator of Art Richard F. Brown welcomed its members for a conference October 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. A description of the well-planned, three-day meeting evokes a tribute to Dr. Brown's leadership and a reminder of the wealth of sights available in Los Angeles, Pasadena and Long Beach.

The Los Angeles County Museum was the locale on Thursday for a heavy opening day schedule of business, which was followed by a banquet for the visitors given by the Museum Association at the California Club. On Friday the Pasadena Art Museum was host, with the wonderful Exhibition on Contemporary Italian Painting on view. A cross-town jaunt in the afternoon included a visit to see the collection at U.C.L.A. and its current, fine Print Show. This was followed by a tour of the J. Paul Getty Museum, with cocktails served in its unique atmosphere.

Saturday morning the Association members saw another landmark when they visited Hollyhock House in Barnsdall Park. This handsome home was the first California creation of Frank Lloyd Wright, who also designed the adjacent Municipal Art Gallery, now housing paintings by Ludwig Bemelmans and blown glass by John Burton. The Los Angeles Municipal Art Patrons graciously entertained the visitors at a luncheon in Hollyhock House which was followed by a final business meeting and election of officers.

At the Thursday and Friday meetings a wide range of topics was discussed, and new techniques and materials for installation dem-



onstrated. Great general interest was shown in the scheduling and sharing of circulating exhibitions, and in the problem of maintaining professional standards in smaller museums. The establishment of a Central Conservation and Restoration Center for the west coast was suggested.

Building was a subject of intense concern. Many western museums are expanding present facilities or building new ones. At the present time a new building is rising in Phoenix; the De Young Museum in San Francisco has completed the Kress Wing and is working on another wing; the La Jolla Museum is ready to build a new wing; the San Diego Museum is raising money to expand. Association members agree that the health of every great museum depends upon growth; first of the public interest in the institution, and then, as a result of this, the needed growth of the physical plant.

Improved Lighting in Galleries

An ingenious new lighting system has been installed in the ceilings of the temporary exhibition galleries M-D2, M-D4, and M-D6. Designed by Assistant Chief Curator of Art James H. Elliott, it consists of a ladder-like structure which utilizes "trol-e-ducts." These carry two cables between which spot or flood lights may be affixed at any point. This allows a very flexible control of light which can be changed to suit the demands of each exhibition. It serves particularly well in lighting sculpture and the frequently moved temporary walls.

There is new electric wiring in the marble halls around the foyer, an area used for the permanent collection and occasionally for temporary exhibitions. The trol-e-duct system with beam spots has been installed to light the permanent collection, recently re-hung, in the 19th and 20th century galleries on the second floor. In the French Gallery a new type fluorescent light has been installed over each picture (this installation made possible by Museum Association funds).

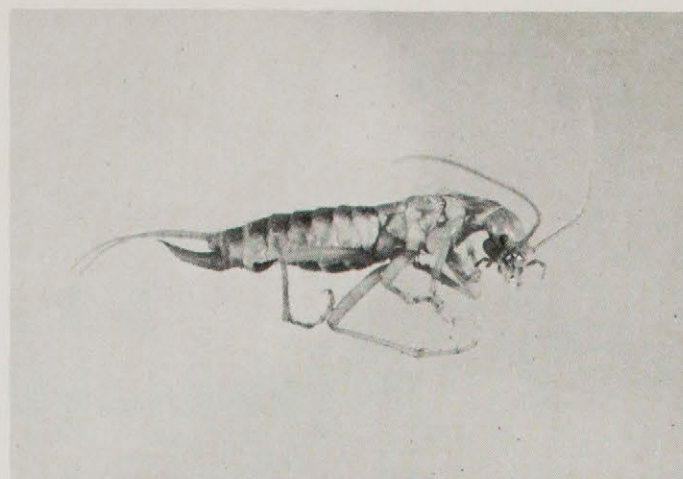
Conference at a Castle

The Hearst Castle at San Simeon provided not only a magnificent setting but also highlights of the program for the Western Museums Conference October 17th and 18th.

Among Museum staff members enjoying an afternoon at the Castle were Chief of Education Russell J. Smith, immediate past-president of the Conference and currently serving as its Editor, and Miss Frieda Kay Fall, our Museum Registrar, who is Secretary-Treasurer of the Conference.

After an opening general session and lunch at Cambria Pines Lodge, members and guests were taken on an extended tour of the Castle. A panel of State Museum officials discussed the problems of opening and operating this new State monument.

Carl S. Dentzel, Director of the Southwest Museum and President of the Conference, presided over the official dinner and program at the Lodge in the evening and section meetings the next morning.



A primitive and extremely rare insect, the grylloblattid. Illustrated actual size.

Curatorial Discovery in an Ice Cave

Deep in an ice cave, 70 feet below the tortured surface of a lava bed, Dr. Fred S. Truxal, Curator of Entomology, found his first grylloblattid running rapidly over the ice. This insect is a primitive relative of the cricket, and its home was below a lava extrusion which covers three and one-half by five miles in the rugged Eagle Lake area near Mount Lassen, California.

The grylloblattid lives only on or near permanent ice or snow, at high altitudes and at low temperatures (33 to 43 F.). Under such conditions most creatures become very sluggish and most insects die. Not the grylloblattid! In fact it reacts conversely—dying when exposed to temperature above 50 F. These insects are extremely rare in collections and considered a prize by even the most diligent collector. The single specimen of grylloblattid taken by our curator represents the first in the Los Angeles County Museum's collection of some 800,000 insects.

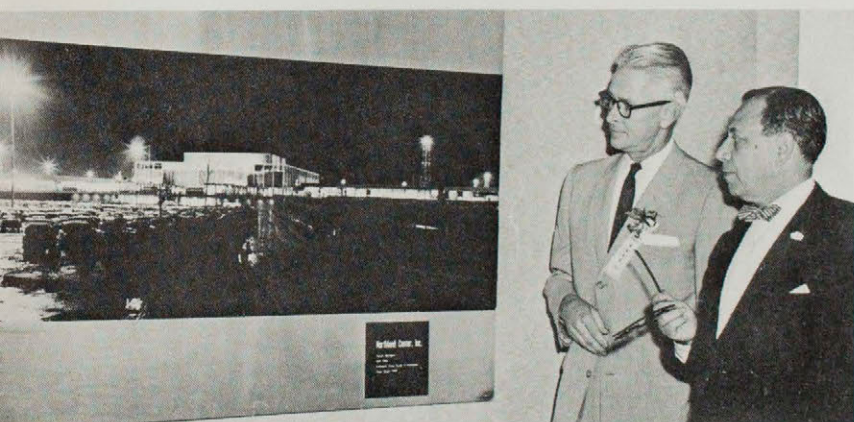
THE State Museum has arranged for daytime parking validations for visitors to the County Museum. Use the State Drive entrance, east of the County Museum.

Museum Association Newsletter

The Churchill Reception

Easily the most colorful of the great statesmen of our times, Winston Churchill is also the most versatile. And the slowness with which the long queue moved through the exhibition rooms on the night of June 20th was a clear indication that his paintings hold a great deal more than the passing interest of the work of the competent hobbyist.

The reception on the roof was a delight. "Blood, Sweat, and Tears," as one of the Museum's hard-working crew somewhat hyperbolically remarked, had transformed a rather drab prospect of asphalt and stucco into a tree-lined garden terrace. It was a night to remember for many things—among them a new insight into a great statesman and the pleasurable response to the forthright vigor and clarity of his painting.



Kendall Ellingwood and Victor Gruen beside a striking night photograph of Northland Center which Mr. Gruen designed.

One Hundred Years of American Architecture

High overhead in the foyer, on the night of July 22nd, hung the gaily-colored, imaginatively designed banners of Sister Mary Corita.

In addition to the Whitney Museum's comprehensive and widely diversified collection, *Nature in Abstraction*, the banners heralded *One Hundred Years in American Architecture*, an exhibition celebrating the Centennial of the American Institute of Architects. Singled out for special honor, in "Ten Buildings in America's future," was Victor Gruen's Northland Center in Detroit. We are proud and delighted that the roster of the Museum Association lists names so distinguished as that of Mr. Gruen.



Mr. and Mrs. Mark Harrington admire a costume worn by Maria Boyle when she married Wm. H. Workman in 1867. The costume was loaned for the exhibition by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas E. Workman.

Los Angeles 1850-1900

From all over Southern California, on the 16th of September, came the members of the Southern California Historical Society. They came to hold their official meeting in conjunction with the opening of *Los Angeles 1850-1900*, a remarkable exhibition which Ruth Mahood and her staff had assembled from the Museum's historical collections.

The Harringtons, the Wolfskills, the Workmans, the Yorbas, the Temples, and many others whose names are closely interwoven with the early days of Los Angeles gathered together to admire, we suspect, with a special kind of pride, the documents, the costumes, the maps, the photographs, and the other things which help us so much to recreate the lives and times of their forebears.

We agree with W. W. Robinson, a director of the Southwest Museum who considers this the finest historical exhibition which we have had in our museum for many years. A trip to the Museum to see it, if you have not already done so, will repay you handsomely.

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INVITE YOUR FRIENDS to become members of the MUSEUM ASSOCIATION—to enjoy with other members the special activities which the Museum Association sponsors and the special privileges available only to its members.

as members they will receive:

1. INVITATIONS to the Members' Previews.
2. SUBSCRIPTIONS to *The Quarterly* and the *Art Bulletin*
3. THE CALENDAR listing all exhibitions, lectures, films and concerts—monthly.
4. DISCOUNT OF 20% on most items in the Museum Bookshop.
5. INVITATION TO ENJOY PROGRAMS for members and guests only—including activities for children.



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Student \$5

Check should be made payable to the MUSEUM ASSOCIATION, Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles 7